

FRIGHT TIME

3 Spine-tingling Tales
for Young Readers

- FOREST OF FEAR
- GHOST TWIN
- SOMETHING'S IN THE SEWER



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FOREST OF FEAR

by Anne Wolfe

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If his pesky ten-year-old sister Allison didn't turn off her flashlight and get back to bed this minute, Mike Collins was going to clock her one. This is already the longest night of my life, he told himself, and it's only half over. It's quarter-to-one in the morning.

His darkened bedroom still smelled of popcorn and the nail polish that Allison had used earlier in the evening to paint their dog Herman's nails bright pink. Not only had she kept Mike from falling asleep by jumping up and down from her bed to the window, she had spilled

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popcorn all over the floor beside the bunk bed below his, where he was letting her stay just this once. But there was no use in being a nice guy by letting her sleep in his room after she'd had a nightmare, if she wasn't going to stay put. This was too much. A guy could go crazy.

From his bed in the corner, Herman let out a soft growl.

"You're even annoying Herman, Allie. How many times do I have to tell you to get away from the window." Mike sighed, thinking Allison in her pajamas looked like a purple-and-green Mexican jumping bean.

Pressed against the window, Allison gasped. "A star is falling down. Come here. Look."

Mike complied wearily, counting to ten under his breath to keep his cool. Just as he focused his gaze into the darkness outside, something bright appeared in the sky above the trees. The bright dot of light seemed to hang in the air for a second, then it streaked for the horizon, hovered another instant, and sank out of sight.

From a nearby bureau, Mike's digital clock started flashing.

"Whoops. Power surge."

"Where did that light thing go?" Allison asked.

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Mike searched the sky frantically.

"Where is it?" Allison insisted.

"It must've been a plane having engine trouble," Mike said with authority. "Or it could've been a meteor."

"Can we go see it?" Allison asked.

"I didn't hear any crash. There's probably nothing to see."

"I don't think it was a meteor," Allison said stubbornly.

Herman barked once, rose from his bed, and joined them at the window, his tail wagging back and forth furiously.

"What is it, boy?"

Standing between them, the dog licked Mike's face, then Allison's, and raised a paw decked with neon pink nails toward the window pane.

Then Mike saw the red dot again, as it fanned out and fell beneath the tree line.

Just outside his family's small pasture fence, behind tall pine trees, the entire field glowed, bathed in the eerie red-orange light.

Mike rubbed the window pane with the sleeve of his pajama top, drying off the goo left by Herman's tongue. To get a better look, he opened the window. A blast of smoky air knocked him

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back a few steps. Allison clapped her hands over her nose and mouth. Herman barked and snapped his jaws open and shut at the sharp, hot draft of air.

Mike squinted against the bright light blazing in the distance. It was dimming slowly now. He listened as the family's small herd of horses and cows complained loudly from the pasture.

"Go get Mom and Dad," he said softly.

Allison whined, "No, you. I'm scared."

Then the blazing light went out completely. Suddenly, the pasture and surrounding field turned totally dark.

Mike leaned out the window and sniffed the darkness. A cloud of dust clogged his nose and burned in his throat. He turned away in a coughing fit, and recovered just in time to see Herman take a flying leap out the window.

"Dog!" he yelled. "Get back here now." Leaning as far out the window as he could, Mike shrieked, "Hermie!"

He pulled on a pair of jeans and lowered himself out the first-floor window to the ground below, determined to get the dog back into the house. Herman was a notorious runner. If given half a chance, he would chase deer for miles.